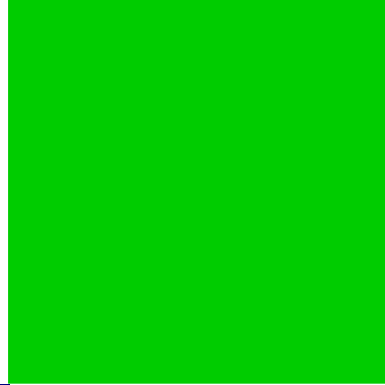


Working with Scout Units



A guide for TU Chapters wishing to implement a BSA Youth Education program

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"In the end, we conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught."

- Baba Dioum

Memorandum of Mutual Support

Trout Unlimited and the Boy Scouts of America

Whereas *Trout Unlimited has long regarded the program of the Boy Scouts of America as the national leader in youth development and conservation, and*

Whereas, *Trout Unlimited and the Boy Scouts of America have agreed to initiate a plan of mutual support within the rules and regulations of the Boy Scouts of America and Trout Unlimited to promote conservation and education of America's youth, and*

Whereas *Trout Unlimited will participate in Scouting through assistance with local councils in community projects, training youth in natural resource stewardship, establishing local youth groups (Venturing Crews), promoting Fly Fishing Merit Badge and related conservation merit badges, and supporting resident camp programs, and*

Whereas *The Boy Scouts of America recognizes Trout Unlimited's goal to conserve, protect and restore North American coldwater fisheries and watersheds, and*

Whereas *Trout Unlimited will endeavor to establish, strengthen, and expand its relationship with the Boy Scouts of America, and support mutually beneficial programs; Now, therefore, be it*

Resolved *That this resolution of mutual support will initiate all efforts to encourage and expand the involvement of Trout Unlimited in support of the Boy Scouts of America toward our mutual goals for a better America.*

Definition of Scout Units

Packs (Dens)

Packs are units for the youngest members of the BSA (11 years old and younger). Cub Scouts work in small units called Dens. Advancement is all performed through the parents and the program is based around the boy's family. Due to the young age of their members, Packs probably would not be the best area for chapters to focus on.



Troops (Patrols)

Boy Scout Troops are the primary unit in the BSA program. Troop members are boys ages 11-17. These units are the ones who work on merit badges along with other related awards. Within each Troop are individual patrols that are composed up of 3 or more Scouts. The Scoutmaster is usually the primary program contact within a Boy Scout troop. At this stage, Boy Scout troops are youth led and the Scoutmaster has the important task of guiding the troop's decision making. In addition, there is a group of volunteers (primarily parents of the boys in the Troop) that serve on the Troop Committee. These individuals help the Troop with execution of the Boy Scout program. The Fly Fishing merit badge and other conservation related awards can be an area of focus with these units.



Venture Crews

Venture Crews **are primarily co-ed units** that are frequently based around a specific theme (high adventure, sports, hobbies, etc.). Members of a Venture Crew are ages 14 to 20 years. These units have advancement requirements with optional fishing electives and might be interested in completing them with a TU chapter. Other conservation related awards can be a focus point with these units. There is a Venture Crew Advisor who helps the youth members of the crew with decisions on what activities they want to participate in. The youth make all of the decisions on what the crew will do for their program activities.



Structure of Boy Scout Councils and Districts

The main structure of the Boy Scouts of America is based on the local Boy Scout council. Every Boy Scout council operates as its own separate entity with its own executive board and Scout Executive who acts as the council CEO. The local council is the largest service area for Boy Scout troops and can be quite geographically large in size. For the most part, the council does not run program activities for Scouts. The council's main function is to provide the professional support needed for its members. Within Boy Scout councils are smaller geographic components called districts which will provide services for Scout units in their local area. As far as size, you might consider a

district to be about the size of your local public school district. Districts have volunteer committees that perform various functions including program and membership support.

How to get started - Contacts

Local Scout Council

When a TU chapter has made a decision to establish a youth education program and wishes work with the BSA it is recommended that they initially contact their local Boy Scout council. This can be accomplished by going to the internet and visiting the National Boy Scouts of America web site (<http://www.scouting.org>). On the front page of this web site is a link to their "Local Councils" search engine. This link allows a chapter to perform a search by zip code of the Boy Scout council that is closest to the area the chapter serves. The local council's contact information, including a web site (if available), will be displayed.

District Executive

Once you have the contact information for the local council, the next step is to call the local council office and ask to speak to the District Executive in your local area. Be sure to mention where your chapter meets so they can connect you with the right person for your area. The District Executive is the local council's paid professional for that area and will be able to direct you to a Scout troop or even better a District Roundtable event. Local District Roundtables are usually held once a month and feature different program topics every month. All of the local Scoutmasters and other adult Scout leaders are asked to attend District Roundtables. Because there are so many adult Scouting volunteers at a District Roundtable, a TU Chapter can make some great contacts by attending one of these monthly events. When you contact the District Executive tell them who you represent and that you are interested in helping Scout units earn the Fly Fishing merit badge or any other activity you feel their members would be interested in. The District Executive will probably give you the contact information for either a few Scoutmasters in the local area or the information for the District Roundtable Commissioner.

Roundtable Commissioner

Local District Roundtables are run by volunteers who are called the Roundtable Commissioner. This person's responsibility is to provide program elements for the District Roundtable. There can be up to THREE Roundtable Commissioners, one for each program area (Cub Scout, Boy Scout, and Venturing). It would be recommended to work with the Boy Scout or Venturing Roundtable Commissioner if possible. Usually guest speakers are invited to discuss a specific subject and its relevance to Scouting. The presentation time can vary from 10 minutes to a full hour depending on how each meeting is conducted. If you are asked to present be sure to be prepared for questions and also have the ability record individuals names for follow up after the meeting.

Scoutmaster

If you are directed to a Boy Scout troop in your area, most likely it will be the Scoutmaster whom you will be dealing with. Scoutmasters are volunteers who perform a number of different functions for the troop. This being the case, they may not be very receptive to an offer to come present at one of their troop meetings. Be very aware that just because your chapter wants to help the troop learn fly fishing; the troop may not have an interest at that time to learn about fly fishing. Many troops will focus primarily on the Eagle Scout required merit badges and let the individual boys earn other merit badges that spark their interest. If you are running into a problem of not being able to provide the program your chapter desires to the Scout troop, feel free to thank the Scoutmaster and ask if there would be another troop that might be more interested in pursuing the program your chapter wishes to provide. You may even ask about the local District Roundtable and if the chapter might be able to make a presentation there instead.

Venture Crew Advisor

As mentioned earlier, Venture Crews are for the most part co-ed units. They function as a separate unit, but can also be loosely affiliated with a Boy Scout troop. The Venture Crew Advisors main role is to provide advice for the youth members of the crew. It is the youth who are in charge of making decisions in regard to program, but the Crew Advisor can be the conduit informing the youth of various opportunities.

Events

Here are just a few event ideas that chapters can use to increase interaction between the chapter and local Scout units:

- Try offering a casting demonstration/class specifically for Scouts at a local lake or park. Invite local units to participate via a District Roundtable meeting, leaving fliers for the event at the Boy Scout council offices, or requesting the information be sent out by the District Executive or a member of the District Committee.
- Offer to demonstrate fly tying and/or casting at a District Roundtable or other Scouting event.
- Invite local Scoutmasters and/or Venture Crew Advisors to some of your chapter's events to get them excited about fly-fishing and other activities your chapter performs.

These are just a few ideas that can be implemented, but use your imagination, there are many ways to become involved in the Scouting program. It is important to recognize that Scouting, just like TU, is primarily a volunteer based organization. There are great volunteers, good volunteers, and burned out volunteers. Just because your chapter might hit a roadblock in the initial contact process, doesn't mean that there aren't units that would thoroughly enjoy learning how to fly fish and earn various awards that compliment the activities of your local chapter. The idea is to keep trying various avenues until you reach a receptive party. Consistency, as with any program

event, is a major key to long term success. One event might not occur as the chapter would have liked, but if it is offered consistently over a long period of time, your chapter will find the keys to success.

Start your own Venture Crew!

Venturing is a great youth based program that can be tailored specifically for fly fishing. There are MANY benefits to the chapter including the BSA's supplemental insurance, which is approximately \$1.00 per year, and many other program related features. If your chapter is looking to establish a youth group, a Venture Crew would make a great outlet for this type of activity. All that is required are two adults and two youth between the age of 14 and 20 to register as members of the crew. Venture Crews establish their own set of guidelines for many portions of their program, including what sort of uniform to wear. An embroidered casting shirt would be completely acceptable as a way to identify members of a Venture Crew. More specific information on Venturing and its advantages can be found on the National BSA's Venturing web site: <http://www.scouting.org/venturing/home.html>.

The Fly Fishing Merit Badge

A natural connection with the Scouting program would be the Fly Fishing merit badge. Only offered since 2002, the Fly Fishing merit badge has been very popular with Scouts. In order for your chapter to work with Scouts in the merit badge, you need to have at least one member of your chapter registered with the BSA as a merit badge counselor. This should be free, as most BSA councils waive the cost of registering merit badge counselors as a courtesy. This person should be the main chapter representative who would be working with the Scouts and is the only one who may sign off the Scouts work on the merit badge requirements. A Fly Fishing merit badge pamphlet is available for purchase at the local council's Scout Store or on-line at: <http://www.scoutstuff.org>. You can find the most current requirements for the Fly Fishing merit badge and also a Merit Badge Primer video that describes the merit badge process on the National BSA web site: <http://www.scouting.org>. Just conduct a search for "Merit Badge".



How/Why be a Merit Badge Counselor

The first thing to realize is that anyone can be a merit badge counselor. If you are over the age of 18, and have the skill set to teach fly fishing, you can perform this very important function. Merit badge counselors are the key to success in the merit badge program. They offer their time, experience, and knowledge to help guide Scouts in one or more of the merit badge subjects.

The merit badge counselor will:

- Assist the Scout as he plans the assigned projects and activities to meet the merit badge requirements.
- Coach the Scout through interviews and demonstrations on how to do the required skills of the craft, business, or hobby.
- Follow the requirements of the merit badge, making no deletions or additions, ensuring that the advancement standards are fair and uniform for all Scouts.
- Certify the Scout after determining whether he is qualified for the merit badge.

A merit badge counselor must:

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Be proficient in the merit badge subject by vocation or hobby.
- Be able to work with Scout-age boys.
- Be registered as a merit badge counselor with the Boy Scouts of America

It's important to realize that the merit badge program is based on the Scout learning from an individual the skills behind a specific hobby or vocation. The Scout does not need to become an expert at casting a fly in order to earn a merit badge. ***It is also important to note that chapters are not to change, or deviate in any way, from the established requirements in the Fly Fishing merit badge pamphlet.***

Other Merit Badge Opportunities

There are a number of other merit badges that TU chapters can assist with other merit badges including Fishing and Fish and Wildlife Management.

Detailed information about the merit badge program can be found on the National BSA web site at the following link: <http://www.scouting.org/factsheets/02-500.html>. You may also view detailed information about all of Scouting's merit badges, including worksheets to help with the merit badge, at: <http://www.meritbadge.com>.

Leave No Trace

Today, use of designated wilderness areas has increased from 4 million people in 1964, to 7 million people in 1974, to 15 million in 1984, 21 million in 1994, and nearly 30 million users in 2000. That's a very large increase in 30 years! As cities grow and populations encroach upon wildlands and recreation areas, we must do more than just pick up the litter and extinguish campfires. Leave No Trace is not simply a program for visiting the backcountry, it is an attitude and a way of life. Learning about Leave No Trace is an important part of every youth's Scouting experience.

The knowledge and concepts of Leave No Trace can be found in the BSA's Fly Fishing merit badge pamphlet. It is a great help for teaching others the value of our natural streams and rivers and the methods we can use to help protect and conserve these areas for future generations. For more information go to the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Education's web site: <http://www.lnt.org>.

Summer Camp

Summer camp is a great opportunity for fly fishing clubs to teach fly fishing to local Scouts. Ask the Scout council if they have a summer camp (not all do) and if they offer the Fly Fishing merit badge at camp. If they do, ask for the name of the Camp Program Director and see if that person would be interested in your club helping with teaching Scouts the merit badge. Many times Boy Scout summer camps will bring in counselors to work on specific merit badge requirements for one day during the summer camp week so the time commitment is not as large. Chapter members performing this service would need to register as merit badge counselors.

First Cast and Coldwater Conservation Education Materials

The TU First Cast Manual and Curriculum are designed to give an overview of how to start (or expand) a successful youth education program in your chapter. It provides general program guidelines and advice, allowing you to tailor the structure to best fit your situation and goals. The manual is very detailed and can be a great asset to help your chapter better tailor a Scout specific education program. The Coldwater Conservation Education manual is a tremendous resource to enhance the conservation education of Scouts and can be used in conjunction with many of Scouting's awards. The First Cast and Coldwater Conservation Education materials can be found on the National TU web site, <http://www.tu.org>, under Youth Education.

Other opportunities to work with Scout units

Conservation Awards for Scouts and Venturers

Scouting has various conservation awards and many can be used in conjunction with chapter conservation projects. Scouting's conservation program emphasis is designed to incorporate throughout the Scouting program and activities an awareness and understanding of conservation as wise and intelligent management of natural resources. If your chapter is active with a local conservation project, ask if you can present an overview of the project at a local District Roundtable and then invite local units to help participate in conjunction with your chapter members. This might satisfy a requirement for any one of the various conservation awards the Scouting program offers. Here is a brief synopsis of the conservation awards chapters can work with Scout units and help individual Scouts earn.

Conservation Good Turn

The Conservation Good Turn is an opportunity for Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops, and Venturing crews to join with conservation or environmental organizations (federal, state, local, or private) to carry out a Conservation Good Turn in their home communities.



More information about the Conservation Good Turn Award, including the application for the award, can be found at: <http://www.scouting.org/boyscouts/resources/21-386/index.html>

William T. Hornaday Award

One of the oldest conservation awards in the United States, the William T. Hornaday Awards program encourages and recognizes units, Scouts, Venturers, and Scouters who design, lead, and carry out conservation projects that are based on sound scientific principles and practices. The projects should contribute to sound conservation and environmental improvement in the local community, the region, or the nation. The applicant is expected to research potential projects and to choose, with guidance from a Hornaday advisor, a worthy project from a recognized conservation category. Boy Scouts and Venturers, including girls if they are a in a Venture Crew, can earn one of the individual awards. Chapters can provide guidance in the form of recommended conservation projects and also individual members of the chapter could act as Hornaday Award advisors to youth desiring to earn one of these prestigious conservation awards.



More information about the Hornaday Conservation Awards, including the applications for the award, can be found at:

<http://www.scouting.org/awards/hornaday/index.html>

Eagle Scout Projects

The fact that a boy is an Eagle Scout has always carried with it a special significance, not only in Scouting but also as he enters higher education, business or industry, and community service. The award is a performance based achievement whose standards have been well-maintained over the years. Not every boy who joins a Boy Scout troop earns the Eagle Scout rank; only about 5 percent of all Boy Scouts do so. Part of the award requirement is for a young man to plan and execute a meaningful service project in their community. The project can be conservation related and that is where a TU chapter can help out. Suggest a stream restoration or other type of project. Helping with an Eagle project can be a very rewarding process and can lead to long term relationships with local Scout units.



More information about the Eagle Scout rank, can be found at:

<http://www.scouting.org/factsheets/02-516.html>

Venturing Awards & Powder Horn

The Venturing program has its own set of awards and TU Chapters can assist in the counseling and instruction for portions of these awards. The primary outdoor related awards are the Outdoor Bronze Award, Ranger Award, and the Gold Award. In addition there is adult leader training called Powder Horn which brings in consultants from outside of the Scouting program to introduce outdoor related topics, fishing, including fly fishing, is an elective topic in the curriculum.

Venturing's Outdoor Bronze Award and Ranger Award

High adventure and the outdoors have always been of interest to young Americans as well as an important part of the BSA program. The purpose of these awards is to encourage Venturers to achieve a high level of outdoor skills proficiency. Fishing and Fly Fishing are an elective requirement for these awards. Other conservation topics such as Ecology and Plants and Wildlife are elective requirements as well. For the Ranger Award a Venturer must, plan, lead, and carry out a significant conservation project under the guidance of a natural resources professional. TU Chapters working directly with Venture Crews could help develop opportunities and offer expertise for Venturers desiring to earn these prestigious recognitions.



Venturing Gold Award

The Venturing Gold Award was developed to recognize the significant accomplishment in a Venturer's life as he or she has proven outstanding performance in a broad spectrum of activities. Earning it will challenge and motivate Venturers over an extended period. A portion of the requirements ask for service projects to be performed in the local community, much like the Boy Scout Eagle award. The activity projects must relate to at least two of the following areas: citizenship, leadership, service to others, community/family, outdoor experience, and total fitness. Suggested crew activity projects can include, but are not limited to the following: Plan and, with the help of at least four other Venturers, carry out a conservation project that is approved by an agency of the federal, state, or local government, such as the National Park Service, the Department of the Interior, the Bureau of Land Management, state division of parks and recreation, city or county parks department, etc. TU Chapters working on conservation projects can help Venturers working on this award by offering expertise and opportunities to complete conservation project work.

Powder Horn (adult level high adventure training)

Based on the requirements of the Venturing Ranger Award, Powder Horn is high-adventure resource training designed to introduce and expose Venturing and Boy Scout adult unit leaders to the activities and resources necessary to operate a successful outdoor/high-adventure unit-level program. If this training is offered in a local Scout council, offering to be a fishing consultant would be a great way for a TU chapter to introduce themselves to the local Scout and Venturing leaders and also learn of unit leaders that would be interested in perusing a fly fishing activity for their units.

More information about the Venturing program, and details on the Venturing awards program, can be found at:

<http://www.scouting.org/venturing/home.html>

Boy Scout Council Conservation Committee

Your local Boy Scout council may have an established Conservation Committee. These committees are comprised of Boy Scout volunteers, members from various non-profit conservation groups, and employees of local, state, and federal land management agencies. Their role is to help guide the local council in areas related to conservation, including reviewing Hornaday awards. A member of a TU chapter could offer to be a member of this committee or at least to be a local resource for the committee.

Resources

Web sites

Here are just a few web sites that can help with educating Scouts on fly fishing:

www.tu.org - Trout Unlimited

www.fedflyfishers.org - Federation of Fly Fishers

www.globalflyfisher.com - Global Fly Fishing site

www.flyshop.com - General Fly Fishing information site

www.flyfishing.com - General Fly Fishing information site

Pro Shops

Bass Pro Shops has a Memorandum of Support to help Scouts earn the Fly Fishing merit badge and establish Venturing crews. Partnering with your local Bas Pro Shop would be an excellent way to further your chapters reach in the community. Working with your local Orvis and other fly shops are also excellent ways to enhance your ability to work with local Scout units in the area and increase the visibility of your chapter.

National Boy Scout Events

There are a few national events that involve fly fishing. Activities include teaching Scouts the basics of the sport and conservation of our cold water resources.

Boy Scout National Jamboree

Every four years the Boy Scouts of America holds a National Jamboree. This two-week event draws over 35,000 Scouts from all fifty states and overseas. There is a fly fishing venue and lake stocked with trout. Volunteer staff members are always needed to assist in running these activities.

National Order of the Arrow Conference (NOAC)

Every two years there is a National Order of the Arrow Conference that draws over 8,000 Scouts in attendance. In general, the National Conferences are held at a university in the central part of the country, in late July / early August. This event has a fly fishing demonstration area for Scouts to learn the basics of fly fishing and fly tying. Volunteer staff members are always welcome to help with this activity.



Contact Howard Kern at venturing4trout@roadrunner.com for more information about the possibility of volunteering for either of these outstanding events.

